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MTPDS Program Monthly Newsletter

Malawi Teacher Professional Development Support (MTPDS) program is a 3-year USAID-funded project supporting the professional development of teachers in Malawi and implementation of the National Primary Curriculum (NPC). MTPDS is implemented by Creative Associates International, RTI International and Seward Inc. in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

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"I am happy that the moments I spend with my son are enough to show him that as a parent I have so much interest in building a strong educational foundation for his future success. I strongly believe these combined efforts will build him up to do better in later classes."

Words from a proud parent, Samuel Rabson from Kapanda 2 Village, Traditional Authority Kalonga in Salima – See page 2.

MTPDS trains PEAs and Key Teachers on Early Grade reading intervention



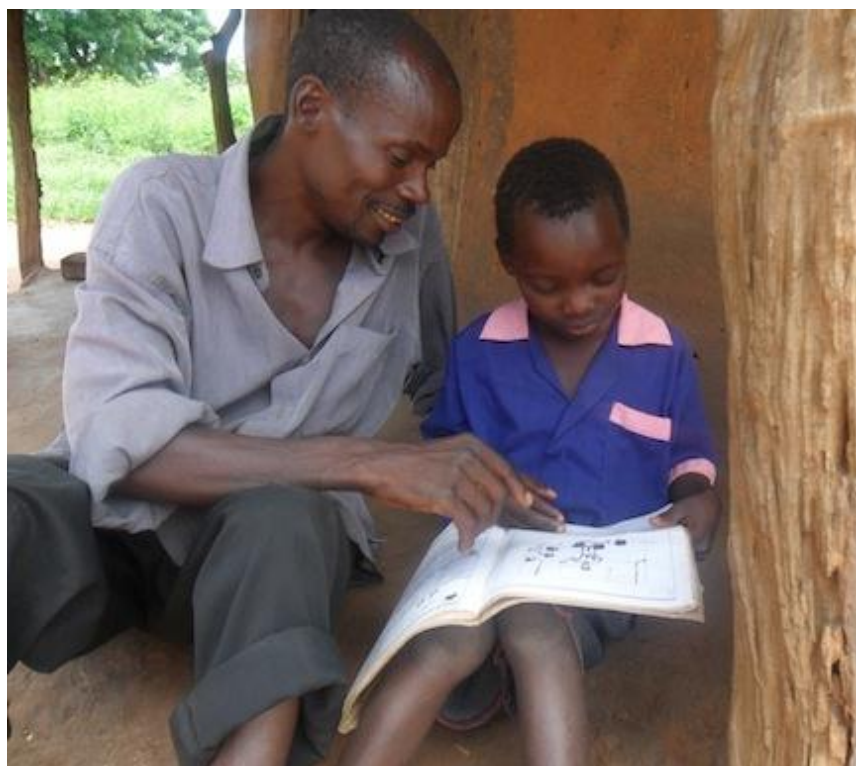
MTPDS team and Blantyre Rural PEAs and Key Teachers posing for a group photos

IN ORDER TO improve literacy among the learners in the early grades, the Malawi Teacher Professional Development Support (MTPDS) program, in collaboration with MoEST, has embarked on training 92 Primary Education Advisors (PEAs) and 92 key teachers selected from each of the 92 zones in the 5 districts of Mzimba North, Ntcheu, Zomba Rural, Blantyre Rural and Thyolo. The training aims to prepare the facilitators for training Standard 1 teachers and head teachers in the districts in an effort to improve teaching literacy in the lower grades. The exercise is also intended to equip teachers with effective teaching practices in literacy that

introduce different types of lessons in the lesson cycle, as well as the 5 foundational components of reading. The activity trains PEAs to utilize instructional materials used in the intervention such as the teacher's guides and children's book, whose content is arranged in a logical sequence with skills building on each other. The 92 PEAs and 92 key teachers have so far trained a total of 1750 Standard 1 teachers and 1038 head teachers in their respective zones. These are from 1038 schools from the 5 districts.

This activity is aligned with two of the five implementation areas of

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Words from a Supportive Parent

“WHEN A CHILD returns home from school, we (parents) often feel that it is the time for our children to help with many errands. We often believe that the time at school is enough for them to master all they need to learn. We tend to relegate the responsibility of academic teaching to school teachers whom the government has entrusted with the duty. For the past seven years, since my first child enrolled in school, I have not been an exception to this attitude. Despite my children making it to the upper grades, I rarely sat down with them to reflect on how they were fairing in class except at the end of the term. This ranked so low amongst daily priorities. Taking care of matters in the fields often topped my list of concerns.

“Today, I feel so encouraged to spend a few moments to read together with my child. I might not reach the level of his teacher but it is worth it.”

I would be honest if I said that very very few parents take interest in the strides their children make in the early stages of their learning. This attitude indirectly backfired on me because my first two children could not read Chichewa until they reached Standard 3. I thought they would pick things up as they moved through to the upper classes, but one of my children is still struggling.

Fortunately for me, an ordinary invitation from one of our children’s teachers has pushed me to go beyond the usual and basic duty of helping my children stay in school to also help them succeed, especially at the earliest stage possible. My third son, Rodney Samuel, is currently in Standard 1 at Ntchuwa Primary School. He stuns me with his exceptional reading skills. One day, their teacher invited us parents to go and cover student books (Nditha Kuwerenga books

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the project; namely, promoting early grade literacy and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning materials. To support these efforts, about 161,000 learners in the districts will receive a copy of the ‘Nditha Kuwerenga’ learners’ book. MTPDS is pleased to report that the Maziko a Kuwerenga literacy intervention is being welcomed with great enthusiasm in the 5 new districts which started to roll it out at the beginning of this school year.

Samuel Rabson supporting his child in learning to read

developed by MTPDS in collaboration with MoEST) which they often bring home. It looked ordinary at the time, but when we were invited again for a literacy fair that this teacher had organized, we were stunned with the Standard 1 learners’ reading skills. Most importantly, the interactions opened our eyes that Standard 1 is a crucial stage that parents need to support efforts made by teachers to help our children improve on reading.

Today, I feel so encouraged to spend a few moments to read together with my child. I might not reach the level of his teacher but it is worth it. So far, I have attended two literacy fairs at Ntchuwa Primary School and they are amazing and thrilling. I am happy that the moments I spend with my son are enough to show him that as a parent I have so much interest in building a strong educational foundation for his future success. I strongly believe these combined efforts will build him up to do better in later classes.”

Words from Samuel Rabson from Kapanda 2 Village, Traditional Authority Kalonga in Salima

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Update

PEAs appreciate new CPD literacy content



Lovelaw Chapomba, PEA in Ntcheu district and Chrissie Mukbori, Divisional Teacher Training Coordinator taking PEAs through the Chichewa Alphabet in Ntcheu

Primary Education Advisors (PEAs) trained to facilitate Literacy Module 2 are speaking highly of the new Continuous Professional Development (CPD) content. The national roll out for Literacy Module 2 kicked off in March 2012, with a two-day Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop at Mponela TDC. In April, trainers comprising of MoEST officers and MTPDS staff fanned out across the country to conduct training of facilitators (TOFs) for PEAs who will be the facilitators of cluster-level CPD trainings. The TOFs were conducted in two sessions. The first reached 29 districts at the beginning of April. The second session was at the end of the month and reached the remaining 5 districts. These districts are Mzimba North, Ntcheu, Zomba Rural, Blantyre Rural and Thyolo, and are the recent addition to the Literacy intervention.

The nationwide Literacy Module 2 has benefitted from new content which draws upon the lessons learnt from the Literacy Intervention pilot. This pilot

focuses on the five key components of reading instruction, namely, phonological awareness, alphabetical principle, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

These five key components of reading are the culmination of a comprehensive study undertaken by literacy researchers in the United States of America, with the aim of reaching a consensus on how to teach early literacy. The team of literacy researchers and educators who worked on the project, known as the National Reading Panel, produced a report which synthesized approaches to teaching early literacy into the five key components of reading instruction. The panel's report has since been adopted by many literacy programs.

National CPD is placing emphasis on the representation of sounds through letters as the most important first step to learning how to read. It is also inducting teachers into the five key components of reading instruction

and is providing Malawian teachers with a new way of teaching reading. In the Literacy Intervention pilot districts learners are reported to be learning how to read by the end of the first term of standard 1, and teachers are happy to supplement PCAR's approaches with this new model, known amongst literacy educators as phonics.

Standard 1-4 teachers will begin undergoing training using the phonics approach when the cluster trainings take place over the next few weekends. Even before the Literacy Intervention, PEAs have been reporting about how the CPD Literacy Module 1 has helped teachers with additional techniques that they now use in addition to PCAR. At a recent training workshop in Ntcheu, two PEAs spoke of how their own grandchildren had made the leap into early reading, having benefitted from a blend of PCAR and the new CPD content. "Now my Standard 2 granddaughter even reads the Standard 8 Chichewa textbook," said one PEA.

With Literacy Module 2 being rolled out at the cluster level, the CPD team is now turning attention to preparations for rolling out Module 3, during the next school holiday. Later in the year, there will also be Module 4.

Additional details:

426 PEAs trained as facilitators who will train teachers at the cluster level in Literacy Module 2 nationwide.

Literacy Module 3 and 4 next in line

SMCs to help in monitoring the implementation of the National Primary Curriculum



Senior M&E Advisor interacting with Divisional M&E Officers

FOR A LONG time, school management committees have been a formidable element that has often

pushed for improved education opportunities for children. However, their roles have been limited to community mobilization towards infrastructure improvement and rendering outside classroom support to schools. The MTPDS project wants to intensify the community's monitoring role with improved monitoring practices and records management. In preparation for this, the project organized a three-day training for its 5 Divisional Monitoring & Evaluation Officers (DMOs)

to prepare them to train School Management Committees (SMCs) in utilizing school report cards to monitor their schools.

The school report card will enable the SMCs to keep track of teacher performance and learner achievement. This exercise will be piloted in May in the seven districts that are benefiting from the Literacy Intervention pilot being rolled out by the project to the seven districts of Mzimba North, Zomba Rural, Blantyre Rural, Thyolo, Ntchisi, Salima and Ntcheu.

Events Calendar for May 2012

1. CPD:

- May 5-27: Conduct cluster training for Literacy 2 Module
- May 1-10: Finalize Literacy 3 Module
- May 15-30: Work on Literacy 4 Module

2. Early Grade Literacy Assessment:

- May 2-11: Data collection for EGRA in Salima and Ntchisi
- May 21-30: Monitor implementation in all Literacy Intervention districts

3. Quality Teaching and Learning Materials:

- April 30-May 11: Standard 4 Textbook Revision Workshop at MIE

4. Monitoring and Evaluation:

- May 2-11: Data collection for survey of performance of teacher and learners performance in 7 Literacy Intervention districts and 7 non-literacy intervention districts
- May 15-18: Train School Management Committees (SMCs) in monitoring National Primary Curriculum
- May 21-30: Data entry for performance survey in 7 districts

Welcome



MTPDS Program would like to welcome Sylvester Sandifolo, who joined MTPDS in March as a Division Accounts Officer for North Education Division of the program. Prior to joining, Sylvester worked as an accountant for a local corporate company for 5 years. Welcome to the team!

Note from the Editor: MTPDS Program Monthly Newsletter intends to provide insights on activities, achievements and success stories from the field. We are therefore inviting comments, contributions and tips for teacher professional development. Please send your contributions to the Editor, MTPDS Program, Area 10/612, Tsoka Road, Private bag B481, Lilongwe, Tel: (+265) 1 794 977. E-mail: info@mtpds.rti.org, Web: www.mtpds.rg. For useful downloadable resources: <http://www.mtpds.org/resources/CPD-manuals>